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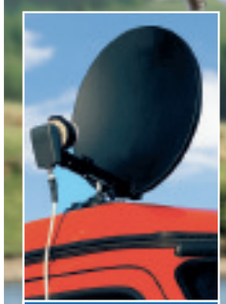

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JUBILANT: Tory Jake Berry took the Darwen and Rossendale constituency held by Janet Anderson for 18 years

ELECTED: Graham Jones

BIG VOTE: Jack Straw

New MPs' vows

Pair prepare for Westminster jobs

By **TOM MOSELEY**

Two of East Lancashire's new MPs are getting used to life in office after voters went to the polls last week.

Labour's Graham Jones in Hyndburn, and Tory Jake Berry, in Darwen and Rossendale, were both elected following long campaigns.

Elsewhere, Jack Straw hailed an 'astonishing vote of confidence' as he defied Labour's national woes and increased his majority in Blackburn on a night of General Election drama.

It was a mixed night for the party in East Lancashire, which saw Janet Anderson lose her Darwen and Rossendale seat, but new Mr Jones take the seat in Hyndburn after Greg Pope stepped down.

Mr Berry ousted Mrs Anderson with a 7.05per cent swing to the Tories and said people 'had shown they are ready for change'.

He had campaigned for three years to take Rossendale and Darwen from Labour. He has pledged to fight for local shops and better transport links.

Mr Berry said: "It's an honour to be given this opportunity to serve you as MP. I hope I will never let you down."

Mr Jones said he is looking forward to his future as Hyndburn MP and is preparing to leave his job as a factory worker to head to Westminster. He said: "This is my home and the only people whose interests I'll act for will be yours."

In Ribble Valley, Conservative Nigel Evans secured a fourth successive election victory, with 26,298 votes.

Mr Straw said he had achieved an 'extraordinary result' as he comfortably saw off the challenge from Conservative rival Michael Law-Riding. He said: "It has been a privilege to serve the people of Blackburn for the past 31 years and to have been returned for another five years. The longer I have served this town, the more I have come to appreciate its people."

Mrs Anderson said: "Of course I'm disappointed, but it's been a huge privilege to have served Rossendale and Darwen for 18 years."

tom.moseley@lancashire.newsquest.co.uk

LOCAL ELECTIONS 4 >>

Ted's daughter in beauty contest

East Lancashire funnyman Ted Robbins is backing his daughter's bid to be crowned Miss England. Molly Robbins, 19, is one of 19 finalists in the running to win an East Lancashire beauty contest.

STORY 3

GRAND TO LAUGH

Comedian Joe Pasquale is one to book early for as part of a star-studded new season lined up at the Grand Theatre, in Blackpool, known as the country's capital of variety entertainment.

Leisure 10

Joy at mother and son reunion

Accrington great great grandma Annie Wright, 97, celebrated an emotional reunion with her son, who emigrated to Australia.

STORY 7

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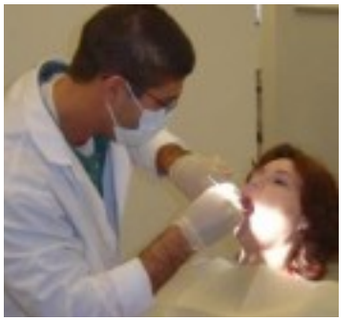

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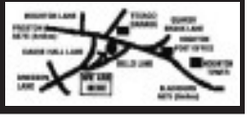

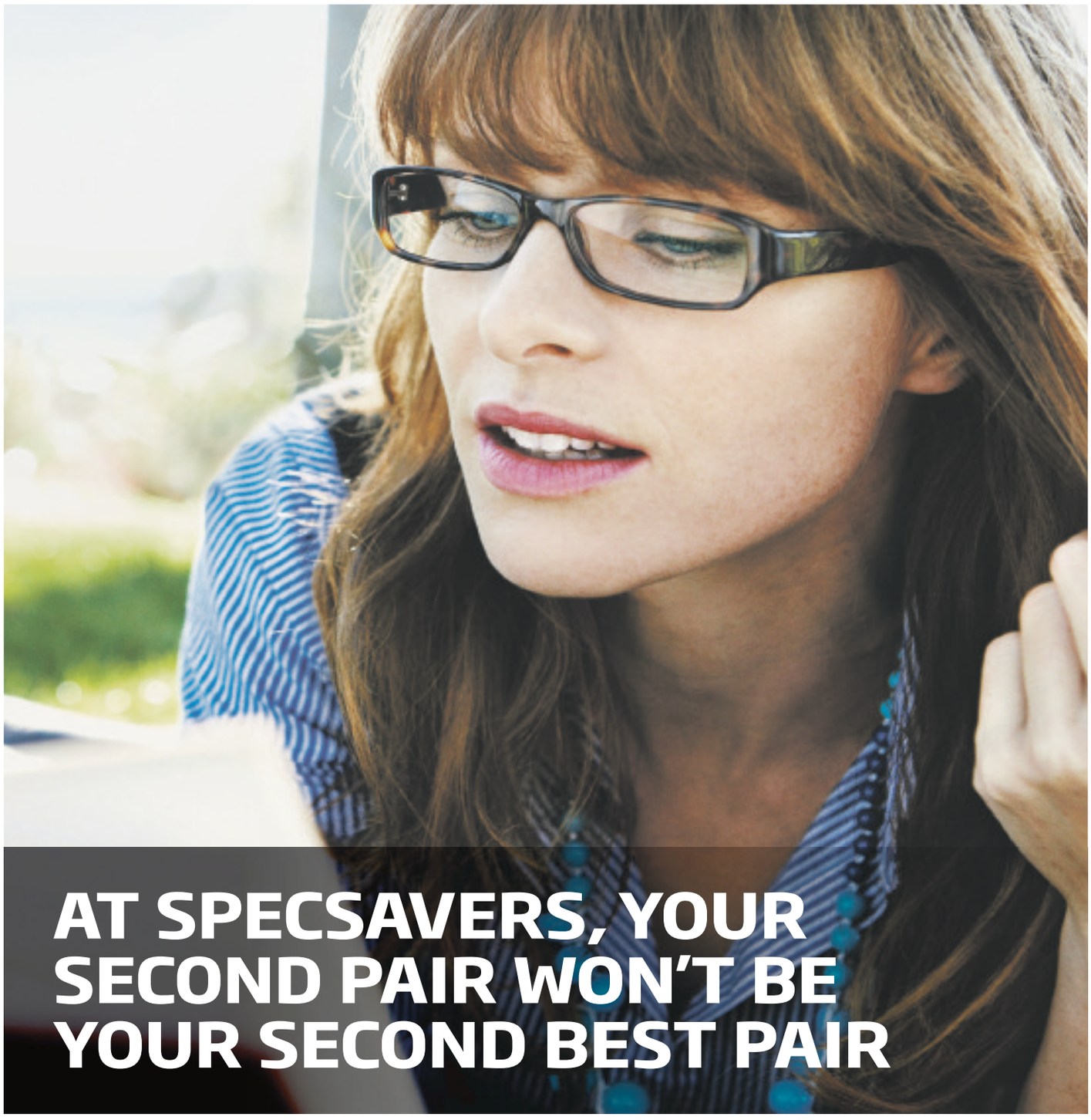

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Citizen In brief

E Lancs star Diana in No.1 chart double

Diana Vickers topped the UK charts again last Sunday – this time with her debut album Songs From The Tainted Cherry Tree. The Huncoat teenager claimed the top spot ahead of East London rapper Plan B, whose second album, The Defamation of Strickland Banks, charted at number two. Diana's first single, Once, also went to number one a couple of weeks ago The former Westholme schoolgirl, 18, shot to fame on X-Factor, reaching the semi-final stage of the competition, before being booted out in December 2008.

A killer flu in

Darwen Local History Society next meets on Monday, May 17, at Bridge Street Sports and Social Club, at 7.30pm. Tony Foster will present a talk called 'And In Flew Enza', about the 1918 flu pandemic which killed 30million people.

Baby bonding

Sure Start centres in Hyndburn are encouraging parents to make the most of baby massage classes across the borough. The sessions, for newborn to crawling-age babies, are said to be a relaxing bonding experience for parent and child. Book on 01254 387757.

Ted's daughter in beauty contest bid

By **JON LIVESEY**

East Lancashire funnyman Ted Robbins is backing his teenage daughter's bid to be crowned Miss England.

Molly Robbins, 19, is one of 19 finalists in the running to win an East Lancashire beauty contest this month.

But the modest Manchester University student said she would be 'really surprised' if she gets through.

She said: "I'm not really nervous because there won't be that many people there. I will be really surprised if I get through, but it will be really good for my confidence."

As well as her celebrity dad, who presents a show on Blackburn-based BBC Radio Lancashire and played Den Perry in Peter Kay's Phoenix Nights, Molly has other famous relatives, including her aunt Kate Robbins, and Sir Paul McCartney – her dad's second cousin.

Molly, of Crawshawbooth, is bidding to be named Miss Burnley at Turf Moor on May 27.

But the former Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School pupil, who has five A-levels and 12 GCSEs, is not planning a career in showbusiness.

Molly, who is studying media make-up, said she would like to specialise, using make-up to cover facial scars on burns victims. Doting dad Ted said: "I'm very proud. Molly has always had a go at anything. She took up swimming with great passion and was a member of Rossendale Swimming Club. She was usually bringing up the rear, but she stuck at it. Then there was cross-country running, and she's always loved horses. She's a very talented artist as well. She certainly isn't an air-head, that's for sure."

CELEBRITY FAMILY: Molly Robbins and her dad funnyman Ted. Left, Molly with one of her sponsor David Fishwick's cars

Three girls will go through to represent Burnley in the semi-final of Miss England. Pendle-based businessman David Fishwick is sponsoring Molly's attempt to claim the Miss Burnley crown.

To vote for Molly go to www.missburnley.co.uk

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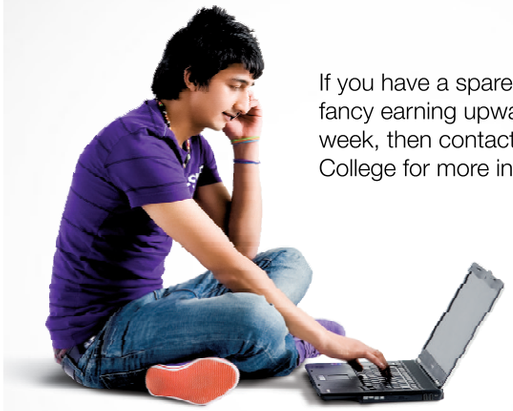

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Local elections

DELIGHT: The Conservatives celebrate with council leader Peter Britcliffe

By **TOM MOSELEY**

Power is on a knife-edge in Hyndburn, while Labour almost re-seized power in Blackburn with Darwen in the local council elections.

The turnout last Thursday was boosted by the General Election, with voting taking place on the same day.

Labour came within a whisker of regaining control of Blackburn with Darwen Council after a strong showing in the local elections.

The party gained three seats, with the Conservative group boosting its total by one.

It meant the Labour Group is two seats short of the Tory, Lib Dem and For Darwen coalition's total of 33.

Afterwards, Tory council leader Michael Lee rejected Labour claims that their party now had a mandate to rule the town hall after stretching its lead over other parties, and vowed to

TRIUMPH: Labour's John Wright, centre right, celebrates victory in Corporation Park , Blackburn

press on with the partnership. Meanwhile, Labour leader Kate Hollern suggested her group would consider approaching another party in order to 'bring the stability the borough needs'.

The balance of power is on a knife-edge in Hyndburn after Labour gained a total of two seats from an independent candidate and Labour.

It means that while the Tories have the largest number of councillors at 17, Labour and the independents combined would be a seat ahead.

However, one of the independent councillors, Malcolm Pritchard, looks set to scupper any takeovers after pledging to support the Tories.

Labour leader Graham Jones, who will be leaving the role after being elected as the borough's MP, said: "In the end the balance of power rested with Coun Pritchard and whether he wanted to effect real change, or to see things continue with the old guard."

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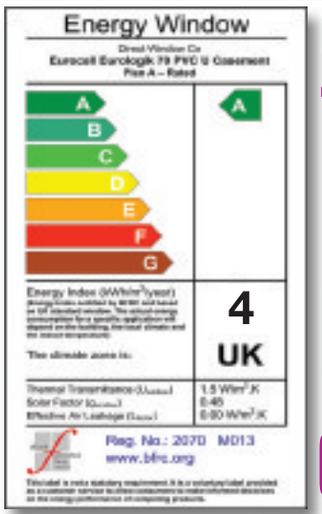

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Mum and son are reunited

EMOTIONAL: Annie Wright, 97, welcomes home to Accrington her son, Colin, who emigrated to Australia

By **EMMA CRUCES**

An Accrington great great grandma celebrated an emotional reunion with her son who emigrated to Australia.

Annie Wright, 97, had filled the cupboards with food in anticipation of the visit from Colin, who moved down under with his family 29 years ago.

And Annie is doubly delighted as Colin is celebrating his 71st birthday during his three-week stay at the home where he grew up, in Westwood Street.

Colin, whom she has not seen for seven years, was greeted by a 'Welcome home Colin' banner on the door, made by Annie's grandchildren.

Annie, who has five grandchildren, eight great grandchildren and one great, great grandson, said she was delighted to have her younger son under her roof again. Her other son, Alan, died five years ago, aged 70.

The former mill worker said: "It costs him quite a bit of money to get over here and I have been over there a few times, but it is lovely to have him home."

Colin worked as a butcher in Accrington before he emigrated with his wife, Marjorie, and sons Lee, Craig, and Martin, to make a better life. He is now a dairy supervisor near Perth.

Colin, who has been home three times since he left, said: "It is a much better quality of life in Australia and it has been better for us as a family, but so difficult being far away from everyone else.

"When we first went out there phone calls home were so expensive. They were £1 a minute. Now we pay $10 a month and all the calls to England are free, so I can chat to her all the time. There's no substitute for being home though."

nazia.parveen@nqnw.co.uk

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Ban glass in bars call

By **NAZIA PARVEEN**

Bosses at a nightclub have called for the price of plastic to be lowered in a campaign to help make Accrington the first glass-free town in the country.

It comes after Blackburn actress Charlotte Davies, of Feniscowles, was left blinded in a horrific attack.

The 25-year-old, who has appeared in Coronation Street and Hollyoaks, is recovering from her injuries after being 'glassed' in one of Manchester's top bars.

Now Leon Kelly, at Level One nightclub, in Warner Street, who has been using plastic glasses since January this year, has urged others to follow suit.

The 32-year-old, from Blackburn, decided to ban glass following a glass attack in a pub in Accrington, which resulted in the venue being closed down permanently.

He said: "When a glass bottle is smashed and turned upside down it can easily be turned into a weapon and I want others to join me in trying to avoid the sheer trauma that an attack can cause to people.

"I have a duty of care and need to ensure that I am taking all the steps possible to protect my customers from attacks like the one on Charlotte, which was horrific."

Mr Kelly said many pub and club owners were reluctant to introduce plastic due to prices being hiked up.

SAFETY: Leon Kelly with plastic glasses

He said: "Plastic bottles are far dearer to buy in than glass, but I can't see any justification for them to charge such high prices as it puts businesses off and puts our customers at risk. A box of 24 glass bottles of WKD costs £21, whereas the price of the same amount in plastic bottles is £27.50."

Mr Kelly added: "If we all get together, then we will force the companies to lower their prices."

Hundreds of friends and supporters of Charlotte have also signed a petition, set up on social networking website Facebook, calling for glass to be banned and plastic glasses used in pubs.

She said: "I am glad that this campaign is moving forward. I was glassed in a totally unprovoked attack. I hope that getting rid of glass will make sure that nobody else is hurt."

Citizen In brief

Cemetery group set up website

The Friends of Darwen Cemetery can check its newly-launched website for updates on restoration projects. Chaired by town councillor John East, above, the group hopes to restore and re-erect fallen headstones, keep the grassed areas tidy, and create a dedicated ashes-scattering site.

Members are also looking for donations of new equipment. Visit www.darwencemetery.org.uk

Join bat walk

Nature lovers can join a twilight walk to watch bats flying at Arden Hall, Accrington. The event is being arranged by environmental charity Prospects on Friday, May 28. Meet at the gates at the end of Plantation Street, at 9pm.

Youth fun

Teenagers are being urged to join in with numerous activities at the Huncoat Youth Action Project building, in Within Grove. Activities for ages 13 to 19 are every Wednesday, from 3.30pm to 6.30pm, until October.

Join in at festival

Singers, dancers and other entertainers are being urged to come forward to take part in this year's South East Family Fusion Festival in Queen's Park, Blackburn, on July 17, from 1pm to 6pm. Anyone interested in performing should call neighbourhood manager Tanya Gallagher on 01254 50320, or email tanya.gallagher@blackburn.gov.uk

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Darwen Vale High School runs Lego and robotics clubs on Thursday nights during term time, from 3.30pm to 5pm.

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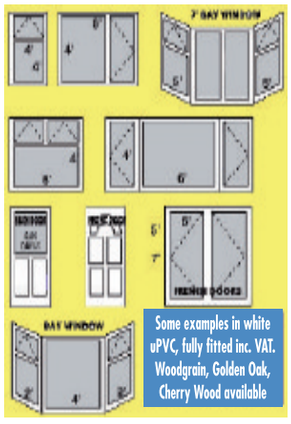

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A Grand line-up

Dad's Army, comedian Joe Pasquale, Hyacinth Bucket and shambling sleuth Columbo are all taking centre stage this summer as part of the new season at Blackpool Grand Theatre.

Over the coming months, a string of stars from stage and screen are set to descend on the seaside town, known as the country's capital of variety entertainment.

Lieutenant Columbo is on the case this week with Prescription: Murder – the first case ever written for the original stage play, and pilot episode for the hit American TV series.

Later this month holiday camp antics get underway in Hi-de-Hi, starring original TV cast members Barry Howard and Nikki Kelly, in a stage adaptation of the show.

EastEnders' original bad boy Leslie Grantham will be taking to the stage appearing as Private Walker in Dad's Army On The March, in commemoration of Veterans' Week 2010.

The golden days of rock and roll are also remembered with musical Rock Around The Clock. Family fun includes Roald Dahl's George's Marvellous Medicine and The Little Big Club, starring Barney, Bob the Builder, Angelina Ballerina, Pingu, Fifi Forget-me-Not and Fireman Sam.

STAR-STUDDED: Leslie Grantham, left, in Dad's Army On The March. Far left, Joe Pasquale

Also just announced is the return of opera to The Grand, with Co-Opera Company bringing Puccini's La Bohème and Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro.

Comedy comes in the form of a new stage production of TV's Keeping Up Appearances starring Darling Buds Of May actress Rachel Bell as Hyacinth Bucket. And comedian Joe Pasquale, who has added Blackpool to his UK tour, is one to book early for.

● **For full show information and bookings contact the Grand Theatre box office on 01253 290190.**

Cinema round-up

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET (18) Glossy re-make of the 1984 horror classic. All of the home-made special effects of the original, part of its crude charm, have been replaced by digital special effects that look horribly fake.

DISAPPEARANCE OF ALICE CREED (18) Taught thriller that doesn't quite live up to its promise. Gemma Arterton plays a millionaire's daughter who is kidnapped by criminals.

FURRY VENGEANCE (PG) A tenacious raccoon and his forest friends fight back to protect their stomping ground from a housing development in this family comedy.

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By Katie Holden

DAMP is a creeping menace that affects thousands of homes across the north west.

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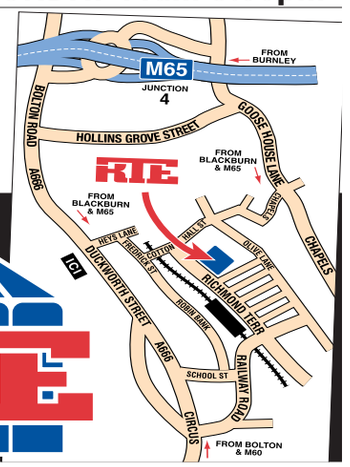

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Thursday 20th May

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£4.99 EACH

Background light

ALDI

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Thursday 20th May

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£6.99 EACH

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£1.19 EACH

290g, £4.10 per kg

Taco Tray Kit

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270g

£1.99 EACH

How to find us

NEW Great Harwood store

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